

How to Find “The One Who Knows”



Luang Poo Tate

Wat Hin Mark Peng

The Citta rules the roost! It is more important than anything in the world. The Citta supervises the body. The world exists because of the Citta. All the individual Citta give rise to form and bodies. If there were no Citta, there would be no world, no people, and no animals. However, it is difficult for the Citta to have these things. That's why it is people who have animals. This is why there is turmoil in our world because the Citta is/are¹ not peaceful. It/they hasn't been trained to that level and so it/they is confused. If each individual took charge of their own Citta, then there would not be a problem.

In the past, four to five hundred Ariya² lived together without arguments or quarrels. These days, just two people living together have heaps of problems and all because they don't take charge of their Citta.

How to control the Citta. There are several ways to train in Kammatthāna³, that is, training the Citta. All Buddhist training is based on nothing else but Kammatthāna. Various teachers have different expertise but all train in a similar manner. The end result is taking charge of one's Citta and bringing it under control.

Some use (as a meditation subject) rising and falling (of the abdomen), some recollect the virtues of the Buddha, some use Ānāpānasati, in keeping with the skills that they have developed. However, when the control of the Citta is achieved, these Parikamma disappear. When this happens, nothing but the Citta remains. This is called Samādhi⁴ or Ekaggācitta. Samādhi means the Citta has become a singularity. If you have grasped this, then you don't need to bother with the Parikamma anymore. Supervise your Citta and let it become a singularity. This is what needs to be done.

Right now, you cannot grasp the Citta in this fashion so you must rely on a Parikamma, such as Buddho. Stick with the Parikamma. It is a means to focus the Citta and bring the Citta's attention to a single object. When the Citta is firmly focused on a single object, the Parikamma will slip away, by itself. Even if it does not go by itself, you can discard it anyway. Some people believe that if the Parikamma disappears, you must restore it. This approach is nonsense. You want the Parikamma to disappear so that the Citta can become a singularity. Once the Citta has

¹ The Citta at both an individual level and all the Citta collectively of all beings in the world.

² Buddhist saints.

³ The meditation training process.

⁴ Luang Poo also refers to this singularity as the Heart. This is explained below.

converged to single point, why would it bother with a Parikamma? The Citta will withdraw from the concentrated singularity if it goes off after the Parikamma.

There are several ways to train in Samādhi. You can associate with lots of different teachers, and one will say one thing, and another will say something else. This causes confusion and doubt. I've no idea how this will lead to expertise in the foundation (of Samādhi). Each teacher will teach in line with their own experiences but, in the end, it all boils down to reaching a singularity, that is, the Citta being on its own. The Citta being in a state of singularity is called Samatha (Tranquillity).

Some schools refer to Samatha as Vipassanā (Insight) but how can it be called this when it is yet to reach the level of insight? It's more like Vipassanot⁵ rather than Vipassanā. Thinking that Rupa/Nāma arise and pass away, this is what these intellectuals experience. However, they are yet to understand the deeper levels of Vipassanā.

In the case of true Vipassanā there is no need for thought. There is no need for imagination. It just happens, organically. **When it happens, one knows the nature of the Ti-lakkhaṇa⁶ by oneself and with absolute clarity.** Because of this, there is no room for doubt. When doubt is gone, in that time of meditation, the singularity will have been reached. Removal of doubt at this level is a function of "being one". This is because of the absence of thought, reasoning, imagination, and embellishment. This is what gives rise to extinguishing doubt at this level. However, there exists a deeper level of doubt. So, how do we get at that? Well, first remove the doubt explained above.

Even Vipassanā has to remove doubt step by step.

How to train in Samatha meditation. There is nothing stopping you from training in any method you like. I just ask that you allow your Citta to converge into the singularity. Any method that achieves this is fine. For the moment, I want you to investigate Ānāpānasati. This involves having the in-breath and the out-breath as one's meditation subject because the in-breath and the out-breath sustain the body. If there was no breath, the body would die.

⁵ Here Lung Poo uses a play on Thia words that does not translate into English. Vipassanot, or not Vipassana was the closest similarity that the translator could come up with. The remark is meant to be somewhat amusing.

⁶ Anicca (impermanence), Dukkha (suffering), Anattā (non-self)

People are afraid of dying. If you investigate the breath sincerely and see your own mortality, you will rush to practise Samādhi and take up meditation on death. This is much better than being oblivious to death. Fear of death has great significance. What else is there that is as important as death. This is why I want you to investigate Ānāpānasati. The breath coming in but not going out spells death. The same with the breath going out but not coming back in.

I want you to see death in every moment, always. The Citta will then become disenchanted with the body and will converge into the singularity. This is Samādhi meditation. The Citta doesn't die, though. The Citta isn't able to die. Even if there is no breath, the Citta won't die because its existence is not dependent on air. It is still capable of being reborn in such places as an animal, a ghost, an Asura, a human, or a deva. Air is not always necessary for birth in some of these realms but where birth takes place associated with the four elements and the five Khandha, then it is reliant on breath.

The Citta is formless. It does not breathe; it is simply awareness. The Citta and the Heart are not the same. The Citta is the one that thinks, reasons, imagines and has the one hundred and eight thousand emotional states of Saññā Ārammaṇa. As the Lord Buddha stated, one thousand and five Kilesa and one hundred and eight types of Tanhā stem from the Citta and the Citta emerges from the Heart. It is the Citta that leads the way to birth in lowly or lofty realms of existence.

If you want to see the connection between the Citta and the Heart

When the Citta converges soundly in Samādhi, this is Appanā and you have reached the Heart. If you have yet to achieve Appanā Samādhi, what you see is the Citta. The Citta is the one displaying mental activity. This is what needs our attention. This is what needs proper control. When Sati protects the Citta, it brings the Citta under its supervision and control until such time as it knows what is going on, whether the Citta thinks or not, whether thoughts are fine or coarse. If the Citta is in a wholesome state or an unwholesome state, Sati is aware. This is Paññā but it is not the Paññā of Vipassanā. It is conventional Paññā. If we cocoon the Citta (with mindfulness), then Paññā can arise.

People say that Paññā arises from Samādhi but are unaware of the conditions under which this occurs. They chase after this.

The Samādhi that gives rise to knowledge of strange things, such as seeing Devas, or seeing ghosts, is called Abhiññā. If someone obtains these powers and shares the experience with others, there is great excitement. However, this knowledge is nothing to do with forsaking unwholesomeness.

Real Paññā is to be found in that which we are protecting. The Citta that functions under our control sees all that goes on, thinking or not, imagining or not; everything. This is ordinary Paññā and is experienced by us all. It can be abandoned if one truly sees it as a burden.

The kind of Paññā which we can control is bound by the Ti-lakkhaṇa (the Three Signs of Being). Investigation is characterised by the Three Signs of Being⁷. Everything⁸ falls within the boundaries of the Three Signs of Being, Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta. These are Dhamma that govern all that is in the entire world. Nothing of this world escapes these three conditions.

Anicca, we can start here by seeing that this body is governed by impermanence. We are born with this body, and we need to search for the necessities of life every day. This is stressful as we must do this endlessly. We go after food and, when we have eaten it, we have to find more. This is Anicca because it is relentless. It is this way because all of the necessities belong to no one. Instead, we just collect them in order to support our body. They then break down and return to the four elements, earth, water, fire and air. There is no person at all. This is like us patching up a leaky boat. This insight is called Paññā.

When the Citta is under control, it will coalesce⁹ and become a singularity. It will have reached Appanā Samādhi. It will be still and resolute in that singularity that is the Heart. This is the where the Citta and the Heart differ. When the Citta is taken care of and protected, it will coalesce and become the Heart. The Heart is the one that is absent of thoughts and reasoning. It is simply aware of itself. On some occasions, the Lord Buddha referred to this as “the Knowing Element”.

Buddhist practice.

In summary, it all boils down to one thing “the Knowing element”, and that’s it. However, this knowingness can be divided up further.

⁷ See footnote 6.

⁸ All conditioned phenomena

⁹ The meditation object and the observer will become one.

Extraordinary knowledge is experienced by some and each in their own way. **When the “knowing element” is reached, then the task of this practice has been achieved.** The moment expressions of the Heart occur, it has become the Citta. This time, however, the Citta is constantly in control of itself. No intentional control is needed. Whatever it does, wherever it goes, the Citta guards itself. It is not careless, forgetful, or absentminded. In this state, knowledge is vast. The entire world-system is seen as nothing but Anicca, Dukkha and Anattā.

So, what will the practice be like from here onwards¹⁰? I don’t see what additional practice there could be. Just remain like this all the time, for years. If no further advancement in knowledge occurs, it shows that the state of the Citta has deteriorated or withdrawn. Skilful practitioners don’t have to aspire to or wish to gain various kinds of knowledge. If they do their full measure of practice, knowledge will occur by itself.

If your practice has reached the essence of the Ti-lakkhaṇa, what else could you wish for?

In the most part, practice is confused and full of distraction. Not only this, we believe we have knowledge and abilities but, in reality, we are slaves to Dosa (Hatred), Moha (Delusion) and Ditthi (Wrong View). We don’t understand our Kilesa at all.

INTRODUCTION TO MEDITATION (Following the talk)

Now let’s see if this is true. I want you to investigate Ānāpānasati by watching the breath entering and leaving the body. Wherever you sense the in-breath and out-breath, stay focused on that spot. Stay until you are concentrated on that single object. Now, fix your attention on “the one who knows (the one watching the breath)”. Only “the one who knows”. Let go of the breath. Don’t return your attention to it. You will see the Citta so clearly and sharply that you will say to yourself, “Oh, this is what the Citta is like. The object of investigation is one thing but the one doing the investigating is something else.” I want you to explore the “knower”, the one investigating the breath.

By way of a simile, it is like when we look at the sun or the moon. We don’t look at the one doing the looking, which is the knower, but we do

¹⁰ This point is not elaborated in the text, however, the translator assumes that the previous paragraph refers to the achievement of Stream Enterer and that the reference here is to the ongoing quest for Arahantship.

stare the sun or the moon. This is why we fail to see the one who knows. If we abandon looking at the sun or the moon and instead turn our attention solely to the knower, we will see “the one who knows” immediately.

In this context the word Heart refers to neutrality. It means, being impartial to all phenomena, not favouring one or another. This neutrality is the Heart. When you point to your heart, you point to the middle of the chest. However, in reality, the Heart does not reside there. It resides all over the place. You can think of it as residing wherever you like, such as in the head, in the middle of the chest, in the arm, in the leg, or in the toes. You can think of the Heart as being wherever you like, but you must reach it, you must come to know it. You may then come to understand the Citta because the two are related. If, subsequently, some majestic knowledge arises, it will do so naturally.

This is enough for now.